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Provisional summary record of the 53rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 5 November 2004, at 11.35 a.m.

President: Ms. Rasi ..... (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*) (E/2004/L.55)

1. **The President** invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/2004/L.55, entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".

2. *Draft resolution E/2004/L.55 was adopted.*

Regional cooperation (*continued*)

3. **The President** informed the Council that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had formally invited the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to hold its twenty-third session in Damascus for three to four days during April and May 2005. She took it that the Council wished to have the Commission accept the invitation, on the understanding that all additional expenses for the hosting of the session would be borne by the Syrian Arab Republic, with no additional financial implications for the United Nations.

4. *It was so decided.*

Non-governmental organizations (*continued*) (E/2004/32 and E/2004/L.38)

5. **The President** drew the Council's attention to draft decision V, entitled "Dates of the 2005 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and provisional agenda", contained in the report of the Committee (E/2004/32).

6. **Ms. Hasta** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking as Chairperson of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, said that the Committee had agreed to amend paragraph (a) of draft decision V by adding, at the end of the paragraph, the following clause: ", on the understanding that conference services for five days (5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 January 2005) will be provided on an as-available basis".

7. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Council) drawing attention to document E/2004/L.38 setting out the programme budget implications of draft decision V based on the conference servicing requirements for one week of additional meetings in January 2005, pointed out that if the Council adopted draft decision V as orally amended, the conference services for the five days referred to in the decision — equivalent to one additional week of meetings — would now be provided on an as-available basis. It was therefore expected that available resources would be utilized to service the additional meetings, and that all efforts would be made to provide interpretation during those days of meetings. Given the past experience of low utilization of conference services by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, close cooperation between it and the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management in identifying the meetings that would indeed require interpretation services was highly recommended. Should the Council adopt draft decision V as orally amended, therefore, no additional resources would be required for the biennium 2004-2005.

8. *Draft decision V contained document E/2004/32, as orally amended, was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Cumberbach-Miguen** (Cuba) expressed his delegation's deep dissatisfaction at the inconsistency shown by the Secretariat in dealing with the decision just adopted. The lack of coordination between the divisions and departments involved had been an obstacle to the Council's deliberations and had an appreciable impact on international cooperation in every sense.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(a) Sustainable development (*continued*) (E/2004/L.56 and L.57)

10. **The President** invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/2004/L.56, entitled "Smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries", and draft resolution E/2004/L.57, entitled "Report of the Committee on Development Policy on its sixth session".

11. *Draft resolution E/2004/L.56 and draft resolution E/2004/L.57 were adopted.*

12. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, commended the representative of Benin

for the fine work he had done as Coordinator of the Group of Least Developed Countries in helping to achieve consensus on the transition strategy.

13. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin), acknowledging the dynamic work done by the Belgian representative appointed as facilitator by the President, said that the consultations on the transition strategy had produced a framework text that must now be applied in order to sustain the countries graduating from the list of least developed countries. Thus far, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 had been applied half-heartedly and the international community could now move vigorously to put it into effect.

14. **Ms. Vissor** (Observer for the Netherlands) said that the adoption of draft resolution E/2004/L.56 was important for the smooth transition of countries from least developed status and for the credibility of the list of least developed countries. She wished the Maldives and Cape Verde an easy transition as they moved forward.

15. **Mr. Latheef** (Observer for Maldives) recalled that time and again Maldives had cautioned against the graduation of countries without at the same time helping to sustain their process of development. The transition strategy the Council had just adopted gave his country the hope and confidence it had been looking for as it moved ahead. Nevertheless, the structural handicaps and inherent vulnerabilities his country faced would not disappear with graduation and were formidable challenges that it could not address alone, without its development partners standing by it even after graduation. With their help, Maldives intended to work out an appropriate plan to phase out the benefits it had enjoyed as a least developed country without disrupting its development.

16. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) welcomed the graduation of Maldives and Cape Verde. It was an important accomplishment for the Council and reaffirmed the integrity of the list of least developed countries, widely used as a tool in the prioritization of development resources. The two countries were an inspiration for others, and the United States assured them that they could count on its continued support.

17. **Mr. van der Pluijm** (Belgium) thanked his colleagues for the collaborative and constructive approach they had taken in achieving consensus on the two draft resolutions just adopted, and said he was confident that the General Assembly would approach them in the same constructive spirit.

18. **The President** commended all involved for work well done.

19. **Ms. de Fatima de Veiga** (Observer for Cape Verde) said that the balanced draft resolutions just adopted should be fully implemented. The opportunities of globalization had not yet become a reality for the developing countries and especially the least developed among them. They needed assistance, and therefore the Brussels Plan of Action was also of paramount importance.

20. Her Government believed that the graduation criteria should be revised, with more weight put on the economic vulnerability index. The graduating countries and the international community shared the responsibility to guarantee that there would be no disruption during the transitional period. Special disadvantages had to be taken into consideration, and access to both traditional and new markets assured. Graduation for Cape Verde was both a landmark and a huge challenge. Despite its proud achievements, especially in health and education but also in economic policy, democracy-building and respect for the rights of its citizens, it was still extremely vulnerable in economic and environmental terms, particularly because of its dependence as a small island state on external factors. Her Government was working on a specific strategy to transform the country in the long run, in cooperation with its own private sector and also with the assistance of the international community.

(b) Science and technology for development (*continued*) (E/2004/31)

21. **The President** drew the Council's attention to the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/2004/31) and to Chapter I.A containing the draft resolution entitled "Promoting the application of science and technology to meet the development goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration". She read out amendments to that text: in paragraphs 1, 4, 5, 10 (b) (ii) and (iv), the phrase "the Millennium Development Goals" should be replaced by the phrase "the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration"; paragraph 10 (b) should be amended to read "The Commission on Science and

Technology for Development, within existing resources and within its role in coordinating science and technology activities in the United Nations, is requested to:".

22. *The draft resolution contained in Chapter I.A of document E/2004/31, as orally amended, was adopted.*

23. **Ms. Maric** (Observer for the Netherlands) speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey and the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said that they welcomed the focus on the contribution science and technology could make to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, both the report of the Commission and the resolution just adopted contained rather sweeping statements, giving the impression that the Commission wished to expand its mandate beyond what was specified in General Assembly resolutions. The Commission must remain within its mandate and avoid incurring additional costs in conducting its work. It should be noted that the Council's adoption of the resolution taking note of the report did not imply an endorsement of the report as such.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.